Studying Issues Related to the Subject of Mental Health

Jaouad Yakhlef

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Compiled by Jaouad Yakhlef

ꕥ Introduction ꕥ

This publication is based on a question that was posed to one of our senior American *Duʿāt* (preachers), Muṣṭafá George, during the conference titled *Actions Are the Fruits of Knowledge Seminar* at *Masjid Ash-Shūrá* (October 2024).

In order to present this work to you, the reader, in the best possible manner, I did not transcribe and translate his twelve-minute audio contribution verbatim. Instead, I chose to preserve as much as possible of what he said and how he said it, while omitting those elements that naturally fill any live speech.

In addition, I have inserted a few brief additions to the text; these additions are marked with « ». I have also included endnotes as supplementary clarification to the original content. Moreover, I wrote a piece that complements the first part of the publication.

I hope that this simple yet beneficial work provides you with the answers you are seeking on this topic.

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Another questioner says the following: we are living in a time in which many cases of mental illness are being reported. We also see that more and more Muslims, especially women, are entering career paths such as therapy[1], psychology, mental health care, coaching, and psychiatry.[2] The concern is that some of them are not firmly grounded in the foundations of the *Dīn* «faith», while that is precisely what is needed to distinguish what is acceptable in these sciences and what is not.

In reality, the person is asking two things: what advice do you give to Muslims who choose these professions? And: is this field necessary, and is it safe?

The first question: is it necessary? Yes, it is necessary. Many people grow up in difficult circumstances, in broken families, failed marriages, or situations of abuse. Such people need guidance, and you find this addressed in the works of the *Salaf (pious Muslims of earlier generations)*.[3]

Among the greatest works that address mental states are the «classical» books of Ibn al-Qayyim «from Damascus, Syria.» The way he speaks about inner states is remarkable. His biography mentions that when he visited Egypt, health professionals would gather around him. Egypt had been a highly developed civilization centuries before the rise of Western medicine, especially in the medical field. They were advanced in various sciences, including medicine. May Allāh restore to them that glory and honor.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim {رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ}[4] travelled in pursuit of knowledge to

Makkah, Madīnah, and Egypt «*Miṣr*». When he arrived there, physicians who learned of his presence would gather to benefit from him, **even though he was not a doctor. When a person is sincere, Allāh opens doors of knowledge for him that one could never imagine.** Those physicians, who had no instruments to study the brain or the heart as we do today, would sit with him and be astonished by his knowledge.

So is it necessary? Yes, it is necessary. Nevertheless, the concern is that when a man or woman enters this field **without a strong** religious foundation, it can become harmful. Some matters within this sector are acceptable, others are not.

An example: today there is a strong promotion of LGBT ideologies and of choosing one's own gender. I work in the prison system and am therefore exposed to a great deal of psychological literature. Five or six years ago, some psychology textbooks still classified homosexuality as a mental disorder. Only recently has that been removed. If you look up older editions, you will see that it was listed as a mental illness, with symptoms and treatments included.

There are hormonal imbalances[5] involved in this, and certain medications could balance those hormones. That was the treatment. Now, due to societal acceptance, it has been removed from the books. Not only that: the hormonal treatments that were once given to women who did not feel feminine are now given to men who want to become women. And the treatments that made men more masculine are now given to women. This results in physical changes such as breast growth in men, or facial hair and a

deeper voice in women. This shows that there are harmful elements in this knowledge.

Therefore, someone who enters this field must remain close to the mosque and firmly rooted in the religion. The way this knowledge is presented academically can be very attractive, especially when one hears about neurology, the brain, the heart, and similar topics. But one must not be dazzled by it.

Why not? Because their knowledge rests on two pillars: science and research. When they develop new technology, they discover new things and say: "*We did not know this earlier because we did not have the technology*." That means their knowledge remains inherently limited until the proper instruments become available.

The second pillar is research. Studies are conducted with ten thousand participants here, twenty thousand there. However, does that represent the world? Were these Saudi women? African American women? Chinese women? Egyptian women? Ten thousand test subjects in one city can never represent humanity.

Our knowledge is based on «Divine» revelation «*Waḥy*».
Can science or research ever compete with revelation? **Never**.

That is why many leading universities study Islām. They have full departments dedicated to Islamic studies. They study the *Qurʾān*, al-Bukhārī[6], Muslim[7], and the works of Ibn Taymīyah[8]. They translate our books and write research papers because they are astonished that what they discover only now through technology was already

present in the *Qurʾān* and the *Sunnah*.
They ask: how does Islām possess this knowledge without science and without research? It bewilders them.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, this should motivate us to learn our religion. *The Library of Congress* in Washington possesses virtually every classical Islamic text: the works of Ibn Taymīyah, al-Bukhārī, Imām Aḥmad[9], Ibn al-Qayyim, and even contemporary scholars such as al-Albānī[10], Ibn Bāz[11], and Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān.[12] Their books and manuscripts are preserved there. Why do they keep these works?

Because they know their value.

The advice is therefore: this field is needed, but be cautious. Stay close to the *Masjid* «mosque», learn your religion, read books, and seek knowledge. And when you encounter something that is unclear to you, **consult the scholars.**

Appendix 1: An Epidemic of Psychiatry

When a civilization distances itself from the guidance of Allāh, it begins to medicalize its own confusion. This is the age we live in today. A society that no longer understands the *Nafs* (soul), the *Qalb* (heart), or the *ʿAql* (intellect) constructs a substitute mythology and calls it science. The clearest example of this collapse is modern psychiatry, a discipline that claims authority over the human mind while possessing neither empirical proof nor a coherent anthropology grounded in revelation.

For more than a thousand years, Muslim scholars and classical physicians explained human experience through the dynamic relationship of the *Nafs* (inner-being), the *Qalb* (heart), *Mizāj* (temperament), *Rūḥ* (soul) and *Māddah* (material constitution). They described how emotional disturbances arise when the *Qalb* becomes detached from the remembrance of Allāh or when the *Mizāj* is corrupted through excess, environmental imbalance, or spiritual neglect. The secular worldview rejects this revealed understanding of the human being. It insists instead that behavior and emotion arise from invisible chemical imbalances that no scientist has ever measured, demonstrated, or proven. Their entire doctrine rests on something no human eye have ever observed.

And because this worldview denies the moral responsibility that Allāh placed upon every *Mukallaf* (morally accountable servant), it

attributes behavior to chemicals rather than choices. Yet the history of psychiatry exposes the absurdity of this approach more clearly than any argument.

James Corbett published an excellent report on the "pathologicalization"[13] of people by the ruling class. A person who scrolls endlessly on social media is now a patient in need of a clinical label. In 1851, they invented *Drapetomania*, a so-called mental illness that supposedly caused enslaved African people to flee oppression. For centuries, they diagnosed women with *Female Hysteria*, a catchall disorder used whenever a woman expressed emotion, fatigue, dissatisfaction, or simply independence. The Soviet Union institutionalized political dissidents under the invented category of *Sluggish Schizophrenia*, claiming that those who pursued truth or demanded reform suffered from a psychiatric defect. Today they list *Internet Gaming Disorder* in the manual as if difficulty managing a hobby requires medical intervention.

Benjamin Rush, regarded by the *American Psychiatric Association* as the "father of American psychiatry" and celebrated as one of the founding figures of the United States, played a pivotal role in transforming psychiatry into a political weapon. Rush fabricated a series of so-called mental disorders designed to classify dissent as pathology. The most notorious among them was "*anarchia*," which he described as a form of madness rooted in "*an excess of the passion for liberty*." According to Rush, this alleged disorder could not be corrected through reason, could not be restrained by government, and posed a threat to what he called the "*goodness of heaven*" upon the newly formed nation. In effect, he medicalized political

resistance and treated the desire for freedom as a symptom of mental illness.
And it does not end there. Modern states continue to use psychiatry as a tool to police dissent. Consider the case of **Dr. Meryl Nass**, an internal medicine physician with forty-two years of clinical experience. When she publicly questioned aspects of the government endorsed COVID narrative and raised objections to the approved treatment protocols, the Board of Licensure in Medicine of the state of Maine suspended her medical license. The punishment did not stop with professional sanctions. Regulators also ordered her to undergo a psychiatric evaluation solely for expressing views that diverged from the official position. Her so-called offence was not malpractice but intellectual disagreement.

A similar pattern unfolded in Switzerland with **Dr. Thomas Binder.** After voicing criticism of government COVID policies, he was arrested by an anti-terror unit and subsequently ordered to submit to a psychiatric assessment. He was then placed in a position where he had to choose between remaining in a psychiatric facility for six weeks or being released under the condition that he take a neuroleptic medication. Dissent was pathologized and disagreement was recast as a symptom in need of chemical correction.

The pattern extends even further. In Western countries, questioning government narratives has repeatedly been treated as a sign of mental instability. One striking example is that of New Zealand journalist **Claire Swinney**, who in 2006 publicly asserted that the events of September 11 were orchestrated internally. For

expressing that view, she was detained against her will, placed in a psychiatric hospital and labelled “delusional.”

Her case demonstrates how rapidly political dissent can be reframed as a psychiatric condition when the state seeks to delegitimize criticism rather than answer it.

Psychiatry manufactures these classifications and then claims authority over the human being based on what it created with its own hands.

In 2012, a major investigation led by Lisa Cosgrove of the University of Massachusetts Boston exposed the degree to which the pharmaceutical industry had infiltrated the development of the DSM-5. Her analysis showed that 69 percent of the task force members responsible for shaping the manual maintained **direct** financial relationships with drug companies, including paid work as consultants, advisors and public spokespersons. The deeper one examines the committees, the more striking the conflict becomes. Within the panel responsible for mood disorders, 83 percent of the members were tied to pharmaceutical manufacturers. Even more extraordinary was the sleep disorder panel, where every single participant had financial links to companies that produce the medications marketed for those conditions. In effect, the very industry that profits from the expansion of psychiatric diagnoses played an active role in defining and approving them.

Once these inventions gain momentum, they form an entire worldview. To formalize and canonize this worldview, psychiatry

authored its own scripture. Not the *Qurʾān*. Not the *Sunnah*. Its scripture is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*. A manual that once contained fewer than ten so-called disorders now contains more than three hundred. Are we truly expected to believe that humanity suddenly produced nearly three hundred new diseases in a few decades? Or is it clear that psychiatry manufactures pathology in order to expand its reach, its influence, and its profits?

This ideological construction is not science. It is a commercial theology that replaces revelation with pharmaceutical mythology. It is the religion of biochemistry pretending to replace the guidance of Allāh.

Even within the psychiatric establishment itself, dissent has been strong. **Dr. Thomas Szasz**, a prominent professor of psychiatry and one of the most influential critics of the field, spent decades exposing the conceptual weaknesses and ethical dangers of modern psychiatry and its counterpart psychology. His writings contain some of the most forceful critiques ever produced from within the profession, repeatedly arguing that these disciplines rest on unproven assumptions, ambiguous definitions and practices that often function more as tools of social control and commercial interest than as branches of science.

Look at what this worldview has done to the upbringing of children. Instead of *Tadbīr* (disciplined management), *Tarbīyah* (cultivation), or the compassionate firmness praised by the *Salaf*, the system now declares that a misbehaving child is not

responsible for his actions. The problem is not a lack of guidance or structure. The problem, they claim, is a chemical defect. So the child is medicated with a synthetic *Dawāʾ* (medicine) based on an imbalance that no scientist has ever found. This is not treatment. This is behavioral control that bypasses the *Nafs* (inner-being) and suppresses symptoms without addressing moral development or spiritual health.

The more psychiatry expands, the more personal accountability shrinks. The more psychiatric terminology infiltrates culture, the more human agency dissolves. This is why we are not living through an epidemic of mental illness. We are living through an epidemic of psychiatry. A civilization that abandons the *Qurʾānic* view of humanity inevitably becomes enslaved to invented categories of disease.

Psychiatrists imitate the vocabulary and posture of medical professionals while operating without measurable diagnostic tests. They speak confidently about brain chemistry without possessing the scientific evidence they claim to represent. The field is shaped by politics, commercial incentives, and strategies of social engineering. It is not guided by the sciences of healing found in the works of Ibn Sīnā, Galenus, or the scholars of *Ṭibb an-Nabawī* (Prophetic Medicine) such as Ibn al-Qayyim and adh-Dhahabī.

Our Islamic heritage teaches that true healing involves body, temperament, spirit, worship, and action. It requires *Tazkīyah an-Nafs* (purification of the inner-self), *Dhikr* (remembrance), moderation in diet, purification of *Māddah* (material matter),

balance of *Mizāj* (temperament), and sincere reliance upon Allāh. **Psychiatry offers none of this.** It offers a myth draped in clinical language and a pill to enforce its worldview.
The magnitude of this problem is immense. It affects the individual, the family, the community, and the very definition of what it means to be a human being created by Allāh. Unless people reclaim an Islamic way of working grounded in revelation and the understanding of the *Salaf*, the psychiatrization of our civilization will continue to replace moral responsibility with chemical excuses and spiritual illness with pharmaceutical narratives.

I once came across an intriguing lecture by ʿUmar Quinn titled *Mind Heist*. Here's what I noted down to paraphrase the key points related to this topic aside from other points I found elsewhere:

Contemporary scholars have repeatedly warned about the significant harm found in psychology, the social sciences, sociology and similar disciplines. They note that only a person firmly grounded in authentic Islamic knowledge, with a clear and disciplined understanding of the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet ﷺ, is capable of engaging such fields without being misled.

For this reason, a Muslim must approach the material taught within these disciplines with considerable caution. One should not study these subjects except when absolutely necessary, and even then, only with vigilance and discernment. If a person finds himself in a field where some exposure is unavoidable, such as education or the practical work of offering counsel to others, he must approach

that field through an Islamic lens. His foundation must be sound knowledge rooted in the Book of Allāh and the *Sunnah*.

A Muslim should remain alert and cautious regarding everything he reads, hears or absorbs from the people of disbelief, whether in the East or the West. Much of what we have discussed concerning competing worldviews appears throughout their literature, entertainment, and intellectual heritage. Their novels, academic writings, and popular culture promote ideas arising from so-called schools of thought such as modernity, postmodernity and "metamodernity". All of these frameworks are forms of misguidance, and they often use stories and entertainment as vehicles to transmit particular ideologies and agendas to audiences of all ages.

When we examine some of the early figures who shaped psychology and sociology, we find that their intellectual circles overlapped significantly with occult movements in Vienna (Austria), Germany and other parts of Europe. Many of them were connected to circles associated with spiritualism, séances, the invocation of spirits and other esoteric practices. This environment influenced the broader Romantic movement in Germany, which in turn shaped literary works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Consider also individuals like Constantin-François Chassebœuf (Volney), a companion of Napoleon and an influential ethnographer. He travelled extensively through regions such as Syria and Egypt and wrote a detailed account of his journeys. Western historians as well as Muslim scholars have noted that

Napoleon used this work to assist in his colonization of Egypt. Volney later authored a book titled *The Ruins* during the French Revolution, in which he argued that the religions practiced in his time—including those widespread today—originated from Zoroastrianism. He promoted this ideology openly, and Napoleon himself is documented as having expressed interest in synthesizing a new religion by combining elements from various faiths.

These ideas fall squarely within what is now called *perennial philosophy*. It asserts that every religion contains portions of truth, that no one community possesses the truth exclusively, and that humankind must collect fragments from different traditions to reconstruct a universal belief system. This leads to pantheistic notions and a worldview in which truth is seen as the shared property of all humanity, rather than the revelation that Allāh gave to His Messengers.

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[1] I see a growing trend among several communities to offer therapy/coaching or go into therapy/coaching. Even the Muslim community is not 'immune' to it.

However, do we really need it? Is sitting and complaining about our problems/struggles really going to help us? Where do these psychologists, coaches & therapists base their treatments on? If it is something we really need like water, food, and air, then why did no one ever receive therapy from the dawn of time until roughly 50 years ago?

Who are these psychologists/coaches/therapists anyway? Are they even aligned with your values and principles? If their 'service' is so effective and successful, why do many of them go through the same hardships as their clients? If their 'service' is so effective and successful, why do many of their famous clients (i.e., celebrities) kill themselves? Is it not possible to find answers for our trials and tribulations elsewhere? If not, how did all the generations before survive? Is fostering a victim mentality by encouraging individuals to constantly dwell on past traumas and negative experiences really that good of an idea?

By now, you can guess my point of view on this modern phenomenon.

[2] Psychiatry is just one of the many forms of pseudoscience riddled with unsubstantiated theories and ideas. Even the mainstream media like The Atlantic published about it (*The Real Problems with Psychiatry* — 2013).

It is not in the business of making people well. It is an industry that focuses on diagnosing mental illness, not mental health. It is also an industry that focuses on redefining regular life problems as so-called mental 'disorders' for which psychiatrists prescribe dangerous, mind-altering drugs and/or brain-damaging electroshock like ECT. These interventions are consistently associated with heightened risks of suicidal ideas and behavioral instability. The widespread use of psychiatric medication has had profoundly harmful consequences. These practices fundamentally distinguish psychiatry from what can reasonably be considered authentic medicine.

I would definitely recommend any person out there to avoid delving into this field of junk science; you will only waste your time and perhaps let it influence your own convictions and beliefs.

[3] سَلَفُ الصَّالِح
(Tr. *Salafu-ṣ-Ṣāliḥ*)

The *Salafu-ṣ-Ṣāliḥ* are the pious Muslims of the earlier generations, in particular:

- the ***Ṣaḥābah*** (the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ),
- the ***Tābiʿīn*** (the companions of the *Ṣaḥābah*),
- the ***Atbaʿ at-Tābiʿīn*** (the companions of the *Tābiʿīn*).

[4] {رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ}

Transcribed as *Raḥimahullāh*, this is typically a *Duʿāʾ* (supplication) that is written or recited after mentioning the name of a deceased Muslim. In terms of meaning, translators often render it as "*May Allāh have mercy on him*."

[5] Hormonal imbalance is quite an interesting concept, because it is difficult to determine what an "imbalance" actually is. In any case, hormonal imbalance is not the root cause. Something toxic is responsible for the perceived hormonal issue, such as unhealthy food, low-quality cosmetics, birth control pills, pharmaceuticals, and similar substances.

[6] **Imām al-Bukhārī**

An early Islamic scholar (d. 256 H / 870 CE) who compiled one of the most authoritative collections of prophetic traditions (*Aḥādīth*), known as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

[7] **Imām Muslim**

A prominent *Ḥadīth* scholar (d. 261 H / 875 CE) and the author of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, which, together with *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, is regarded as one of the most reliable collections of prophetic traditions.

[8] **Imām Ibn Taymīyah**

An influential scholar (d. 728 H / 1328 CE) known for his numerous works covering virtually all aspects of Islam. He was also the teacher of other major scholars, such as Ibn al-Qayyim.

[9] **Imām Aḥmad**

A renowned scholar (d. 241 H / 855 CE), after whom the *Ḥanbalī* school of law is named, and the compiler of the extensive *Ḥadīth* collection *al-Musnad*.

[10] **Imām al-Albānī**

A modern *Ḥadīth* scholar (d. 1420 H / 1999 CE) known for his critical study, classification, and revision of thousands of prophetic traditions.

[11] **Imām Ibn Bāz**

A leading scholar (d. 1420 H / 1999 CE) and former Grand *Muftī* of Saudi Arabia.

He is regarded by many scholars as the greatest scholar of this century.

[12] **Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān**
A Saudi senior scholar and jurist (b. 1354 H / 1933 CE), and since 22 October 2025 the current Grand *Muftī* of Saudi Arabia, as well as a member of the Council of Senior Scholars. He is considered one of the most authoritative contemporary voices in Islamic teachings.

[13] Episode 483 – *Dissent Into Madness*